

Helping Children Solve Problems: Ages 4-5

Helping your child to solve problems will give her the opportunity to:

- Practice using words to solve problems
- Become more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others
- Develop self-confidence when she learns how to solve problems in a positive way

Ideas to try with your child:

- Role-play using puppets or dolls to model positive ways children can solve their problems.
- Read aloud picture books about resolving conflicts.
- Walk through the problem solving process step by step: identify the problem, children generate suggestions to solve problem, children agree on a solution.
- Teach children to use “I messages”. For example, “I am mad that you took my toy,” rather than “I hate you.” “I messages” identify what a person is feeling and why without blaming.

If your child is struggling:

- Help your child define the problem. Suggest possible solutions and help her choose the positive one.
- Recall a time when your child had a problem. Talk about how she felt at the time and how it was successfully solved.

Going further:

- Model and teach your child to listen to others, name the problem and find a solution. Brainstorm together ways you could resolve the conflict.
- Talk about what to do “next time” to keep the conflict from happening.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Make decisions and solve problems with other children, with adult help.” Building Relationships, Ages 4-5, p.73